



STATE OF MARYLAND

## DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

*Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

#### **State Investigating Synthetic Drugs Known as “Bath Salts”**

Baltimore, MD (June 10, 2011)—The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) today announced an investigation of methylenedioxypyrovalerone (“MDPV”) and 4-methylmethcathinone (“mephedrone”), the active ingredients in recreational designer drugs sold as “bath salts.” Based on this review, the Health Secretary may seek to add the active compounds to the list of controlled dangerous substances on Schedule 1, which would effectively ban their sale in Maryland.

“We must be vigilant about new and potentially deadly threats to our communities,” said Governor Martin O’Malley. “I support the state health department's effort to investigate this concern and look forward to receiving the results of the investigation.”

“Bath salts” can be inhaled, ingested, smoked or injected. Users may develop cardiac and circulatory disturbances, agitation, delirium, paranoia and psychosis. There have been cases reported nationwide in which users have attempted to inflict injury on themselves or others. The agitation and delirium may persist for days to weeks. In Maryland, the poison control center is aware of 22 cases of poisoning, including one death.

“Marylanders should avoid these ‘bath salts’ products,” said DHMH Secretary Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. “We are investigating their presence in Maryland and are considering regulatory action.”

DHMH is taking the following steps:

- a. Requesting that drug treatment providers assess new patients for past use of ‘bath salts;’
- b. Collaborating with the Maryland Poison Control Center to provide information to emergency room clinicians regarding the signs and symptoms and treatment of ‘bath salts’ intoxication and to gather call data related to ‘bath salt’ use;
- c. Enhancing the investigational and laboratory screening procedures in the Office of the Medical Examiner in order to assess cases for possible ‘bath salt’ intoxication;
- d. Enlisting the assistance of the State’s local health departments to assess the availability of ‘bath salts’ for sale in local jurisdictions;

- e. Coordinating with law enforcement on the use of 'bath salts' as drugs of abuse in Maryland; and
- f. Seeking comment from the public as to information, data, observations, concerns and recommendations regarding 'bath salts.'

The Department is seeking public input on the following issues:

- 1. the actual or relative potential for abuse of MDPV and mephedrone;
- 2. if known, scientific evidence of the pharmacological effect of the MDPV and mephedrone;
- 3. the state of current scientific knowledge regarding the MDPV and mephedrone;
- 4. the history and current pattern of abuse of MDPV and mephedrone;
- 5. the scope, duration, and significance of abuse of the MDPV and mephedrone;
- 6. any risk that MDPV and mephedrone pose to the public health;
- 7. the ability of MDPV and mephedrone to cause psychological or physiological dependence; and
- 8. whether MDPV or mephedrone is an immediate precursor of a controlled dangerous substance.

Please submit comments by July 11, 2011. *Comments may be submitted by mail to Michele Phinney, Director, DHMH Office of Regulation and Policy Coordination, 201 W. Preston Street, Room 512, Baltimore, Md. 21201, or by email to [regs@dhmh.state.md.us](mailto:regs@dhmh.state.md.us), or by fax to 410.767.6483. Individuals may also call 410.767.6499, TTY: 800.735.2258.*

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